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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION

AT RICHMOND, DECEMBER 14, 2001

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, ex rel.

DERRICK AND KAREN DOUGLAS,

Complainants,

v.

CASE NO. PUE010661

SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA GAS COMPANY,

Respondent.

PRELIMINARY ORDER

On November 26, 2001, Derrick and Karen Douglas ("The Douglasses" or "Complainants") filed a formal complaint with the State Corporation Commission ("Commission") against Southwestern Virginia Gas Company ("Southwestern" or "the Company"). In their Complaint, the Complainants allege that the Company (i) terminated their natural gas service without proper notice; (ii) failed to inform them of their right to an appeal or hearing on the denial of service; (iii) retaliated against the Douglasses, based on the Complainants' prior contact with the Commission; and (iv) demanded an unreasonable and excessive deposit prior to the restoration of natural gas service. The Complainants requested the Commission to initiate an investigation concerning their allegations. A copy of the document containing the allegations made by the Douglasses is attached as Appendix A to this Order.

NOW, UPON CONSIDERATION of the foregoing, the Commission is of the opinion and finds that an investigation of the allegations made by the Complaints should be initiated pursuant to 5 VAC 5-20-90; that this matter should be docketed; that the captioned proceeding should be assigned to a hearing examiner pursuant to 5 VAC 5-20-120 A; that Southwestern should file an answer to the allegations made in Appendix A hereto; that the hearing examiner should establish a procedural schedule for this matter; and that this matter should be continued.

Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

(1) An investigation of the allegations set out in Appendix A hereto is hereby initiated.

(2) This matter shall be docketed as Case No. PUE010661.

(3) Pursuant to § 12.1-31 of the Code of Virginia and 5 VAC 5-20-120 A of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure ("Rules"), a hearing examiner is appointed to conduct further proceedings in this matter on behalf of the Commission.

(4) The Company shall file an original and fifteen (15) copies of its Answer to the allegations made in Appendix A hereto with the Clerk of the Commission on or before December 20, 2001, and shall on the same day serve a copy of the Answer on the Complainants and their counsel, Mark T. Williams, Esquire, Williams, Morrison, Light & Moreau, 317 Patton Street, Danville, Virginia 24541.

(5) The Complainants and Respondent shall respond to written interrogatories within seven (7) business days after the receipt of the same. Except as so modified, discovery shall be in accordance with Part IV of the Rules.

(6) This matter is continued generally.